

On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Wednesday, December 23, 2015

Shipping Mania



Last Minute Rush to Deliver Millions of Holiday Gifts

A UPS worker pulls a container full of packages across a floor embedded with casters at Worldport in Louisville, Ky. FedEx and UPS have a combined 947 million packages to deliver between Black Friday and Christmas Eve - up 8 percent from last holiday season's forecasts.

(AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)
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Bergdahl appears in military court

JONATHAN DREW
Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, North Carolina (AP) — Sgt. Bowe

Bergdahl faced a military judge Tuesday for the first time since the U.S. Army decided to proceed with

a military trial that could result in a life sentence for his disappearance in Afghanistan in 2009.

Bergdahl, who was held by the Taliban for five years after he walked off a base, was arraigned during a

short hearing on charges of desertion and misbehavior before the enemy, a relatively rare charge that carries the severe punishment. If convicted of desertion, he could get up to five years in prison.



U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl leaves the courthouse Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015, after his arraignment hearing at Fort Bragg, N.C. (Andrew Craft /The Fayetteville Observer/AP)

Wearing a dress blue uniform, Bergdahl deferred entering a plea and did not decide whether he wants to face a court-martial with a jury or one with just a judge. He said little beyond answering "yes" and "no" to questions about whether he understood his rights and the court proceedings.

He appeared demure, sitting mostly still in his chair then walking deliberately with his head down as he left the courtroom. He talked quietly with his military attorney before and after the hearing.

The next pretrial hearing was scheduled for Jan. 12 before Army Judge Col. Jeffery R. Nance, who will preside over future hearings. Bergdahl, 29, walked off his post in eastern Afghanistan's Paktika province on June 30, 2009. He was released in late May 2014 as part of a prisoner swap, in exchange for five detainees in Guantanamo Bay. The move prompted harsh criticism, with some in Congress accusing President Barack Obama of jeopardizing the safety of

change. A preliminary hearing officer initially recommended a special court-martial, which is a misdemeanor-level forum. But earlier this month, the Army announced Bergdahl would face the more serious general court-martial.

While the military typically follows the recommendation from the preliminary hearing known as an Article 32, it's not unheard of for a high-ranking general to make a different decision, said Walter Huffman, a retired major general who served as the Army's top lawyer.

Huffman was surprised the more serious general court-martial was chosen, but he said the approach will allow the court to thoroughly consider the case with all punishments available.

"It's kind of: 'Let's let the system decide. Let's keep our options open,'" he said.

The charge of misbehavior before the enemy was used hundreds of times during World War II, but scholars say its use appears to have dwindled in conflicts since then. □

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Republican candidate Trump mocks Clinton over debate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump labeled Democrat Hillary Clinton "disgusting" for using the restroom during a commercial break at the last Democratic debate and used crude language to describe her primary loss to now-President Barack Obama in 2008.

"She was favored to win and she got schlonged, she lost," he said on Monday night, using a slang word for male genitalia.

Trump, who has ramped up his criticism of Clinton in recent weeks, also mocked the Democratic front-runner for returning late to Saturday's debate following a commercial break because she'd been using the bathroom.

"What happened to her? I'm watching the debate, and she disappeared. Where did she go?!" Trump said at a rally in Michigan.



Republican presidential candidate, businessman Donald Trump acknowledges the crowd before addressing supporters at a campaign rally, Monday, Dec. 21, 2015, in Grand Rapids, Mich.

(AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

"I know where she went. It's disgusting, I don't want to talk about it," he added. "No, it's too disgusting. Don't say it, it's disgusting."

Trump continues to the lead the crowded field of candidates vying for the Republican nomination in primary contests that

start in just over six weeks. The development has alarmed many Republican Party leaders who fear the billionaire's incendiary rhetoric would make him unelectable in a general election face-off with Clinton, who is widely favored over two rivals for the Democratic nomination.

This isn't the first time Trump has used what could be interpreted as gendered language to criticize Clinton.

ton. He has repeatedly described her as lacking the strength and stamina to be president and invoked the image of her putting on a pantsuit before heading to work.

But the latest remarks appear to have hit a new nerve. After declining to comment Monday evening, Clinton spokeswoman Jennifer Palmieri took to Twitter to label the language "degrading."

"We are not responding to Trump, but everyone who understands the humiliation this degrading language inflicts on all women should," Palmieri said on Twitter, concluding with the hashtag "imwithher."

The latest rift between Clinton and Trump began during Saturday evening's debate. Clinton claimed the Islamic State group had used videos of Trump's comments about Muslims to recruit militants.

"They are going to people showing videos of Donald Trump insulting Islam and Muslims in order to recruit more radical jihadis," she said. There was no evidence to back the claim, and Trump quickly called Clinton a liar and demanded an apology. □

Clinton announces \$2 billion effort to help cure Alzheimer's disease

LISA LERER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton announced Tuesday a \$2 billion annual effort to cure Alzheimer's disease by 2025, calling for doubling federal spending to combat the illness.

The Democratic front-runner plans to introduce her proposal in Iowa during her last presidential campaign swing before the holidays. The funding is coupled with proposals to aid the 15 million Americans caring for those afflicted by the illness.

The proposal marks the first time a presidential candidate has made combatting Alzheimer's a campaign issue, according to advocates, and is part of a larger effort by Clinton to increasing funding for health research.

"We owe it to the millions of families who stay up at night worrying about their loved ones afflicted by this terrible disease and facing the hard reality of the long goodbye to make research investments that will prevent, effectively treat and make a cure possible by 2025," □

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Shippers rush to deliver millions of holiday gifts



UPS workers guide a container across a floor containing casters after it was unloaded from an airplane at Worldport in Louisville, Ky.

(AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

SCOTT MAYEROWITZ

AP Airlines Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The humming is constant; a low-pitched drone from 155 miles of conveyor belts racing packages in every direction. Boxes shift from one belt to another and bump into a metal wall. Thud. Thud. Thud. In the background, trucks beep and jet engines roar. Forget jingling bells and ho-ho-hos, these are now the sounds of the holidays. As more gift-givers shop online, there are more packages to ship. Online sales now account for 10 percent of all shopping and 15 percent during the holidays, according to research firm Forrester. That leaves FedEx and UPS with a combined 947 million packages to deliver between Black Friday and Christmas Eve — up 8 percent from last holiday season's forecasts.

For UPS, the key to getting all those last-second orders delivered on time is Worldport, a massive sorting facility located between the Louisville airport's two main runways. On a typical night, 1.6 million packages pass through. Just before Christmas, there can be 4 million, peaking on Monday night.

(UPS plans to deliver about 36 million packages on Tuesday, its busiest day of the year, up from 35 million last year. That includes all of Worldport's shipments plus those traveling by truck.)

Standing next to the runways just after midnight, jet headlights can be seen

lined up miles away. Every 60 seconds another plane lands on one of the two parallel runways and pulls up to the facility — the size of 90 football fields — to unload its goods.

If everything goes right, the packages are just touched twice by humans: first when pulled out of large aircraft shipping containers and then again at the end of their journey through the conveyors and into a new bin and another jet.

The past two years have been rough for express shippers.

To prevent mishaps, UPS and FedEx have been working with major retailers to hone their forecasts and have scheduled their extra holiday workers to better meet the shipping spikes right after Thanksgiving and the weekend before Christmas. Some third-party tracking services have signaled a few issues with 2015 deliveries but UPS spokesman Mike Mangeot said last week that more than 96 percent of packages are being delivered on time in December and that UPS expects packages to arrive by Christmas.

"In many cases customers are receiving the packages earlier than promised as we are advancing deliveries to make sure the network remains ready for any spikes as last-minute Christmas shipping approaches," says Mangeot. At first glance, Kentucky doesn't seem like the epicenter of holiday shipping. After all, Louisville isn't the geographic center of the U.S. And this city of 600,000

people is hardly the largest in the country. Best known for its wooden baseball bats and being home to the Kentucky Derby, the city does, however, have relatively good weather and a geography that is perfect for shipping. (FedEx has a similar operation in Memphis, Tennessee.)

"It's just an ideal location for us," says Gary Kelley, manager of the UPS next day shipping division at Worldport. "We are within two hours (flying time) of 75 percent of the population and within four hours of 95 percent."

And when you are rushing packages overnight, that proximity to the country's largest cities matters.

A plane from Seattle might be carrying overnight packages bound for New

York, Miami or Chicago. It will stop in Kentucky. All the boxes and envelopes are unloaded, likely by college students pulling the ultimate all-nighter — they make up 70 percent of the employees here.

Next, the packages go onto conveyors where red lasers scan labels and then the system automatically sorts the boxes and directs them to new shipping containers. UPS has 38,000 such containers and they typically hold about 400 packages.

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American Living:**What 2016 will do to your checkbook: Rent, food, gas, raises****Sarah S. Sell****Associated Press**

Wondering how you will fare financially in 2016? Below are what experts think next year will hold for financial matters close to home: Raises, rent, gas, food and health.

WILL YOU GET A RAISE NEXT YEAR?

Maybe.

Wage growth has been perhaps the job market's biggest weakness since the recession ended. Pay increases have been both slow and uneven, highly dependent on your field of employment. And for many, it has not been enough to keep pace with the cost of living.

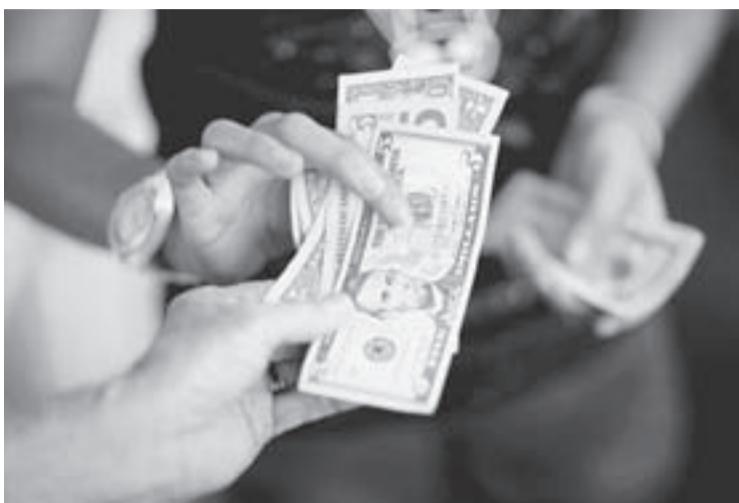
In November, average hourly earnings climbed 2.3 percent from a year earlier, according to the government's most recent report. But that is only about two-thirds the roughly 3.5 percent typically seen in a strong economy.

Many economists are optimistic Americans' pay will start growing faster soon because hiring has been

good and layoffs have been low. But that's been the case for a while, and wages haven't taken off

seems.

"I'm not convinced things are going to grow as much as I would like them to," he



A customer, bottom, pays for goods while shopping at the Atlanta Farmers Market in Atlanta. Wage growth has been perhaps the job market's biggest weakness since the recession ended. Pay increases have been both slow and uneven, highly dependent on your field of employment and, for many, not enough to keep pace even with a slow-rising cost of living.

(AP Photo/David Goldman)

yet.

Joseph LaVorgna, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank, is not expecting major gains ahead. He notes that measures that include a broader mix of compensation beyond hourly wages show there's even less growth in pay than it

said.

WILL MY RENT GO UP?

Yes, most likely. It's been a tough few years for U.S. renters because demand has outpaced supply, causing prices to rise.

Rents increased 4.5 per-

cent in October, 5.3 percent in September and 6.2 percent in August, according to real estate data firm Zillow. The median rental payment nationwide was \$1,382 in October, roughly 30 percent of the median U.S. family income and high enough for the government to consider it financially burdensome. Over the past decade, that number of renters spending over this threshold on rent has jumped from 14.8 million to 21.3 million, or 49 percent of all renters. There are more rent increases anticipated ahead.

"Rents are expected to rise in virtually all major cities in 2016," said Hessam Nadji, senior executive vice president with commercial real estate services firm Marcus & Millichap.

Some small consolation: While rents will still rise, the pace of rent growth will slow modestly from the exceptional levels set in 2015 as new construction creates more housing competition, Nadji says.

WILL GAS PRICES STAY LOW?

Yes, most likely.

Oil prices have plummeted over the last year, a result of high global supplies and weaker demand than expected. U.S. drivers are paying less than \$2 a gallon on average for the first time since the Great Recession. Seasonal factors and volatile oil prices will push prices up and down throughout the year, but overall prices are expected to remain low compared with recent years.

The Energy Department forecasts an average of \$2.37 a gallon next year, which would be the lowest annual average since 2009. Tom Kloza, head of energy analysis at the Oil Price Information Service, said drivers should expect lower lows and higher highs at the pump in the year ahead, but he doesn't expect the price of a gallon of gasoline to go over \$3 at any time in 2016.

"Nationally we are looking

at a year that is very similar to the year we are ending," Kloza said.

WHAT ABOUT FOOD?

New year, same dish. Food prices should rise at a rate near the historical average, according to the USDA's forecasts.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service anticipates the price for food will be up 2 to 3 percent for 2016, same as 2015 and in line with the 20-year historical average of 2.6 percent. That includes food people consume at home and out at restaurants.

Annemarie Kuhns, an economist at the ERS, said that certain food prices were off this year due to unusual events, such as the avian influenza that led to the death of millions of birds and sent egg prices up roughly 15 percent. Looking ahead, she and fellow economists anticipate these prices may level off in 2016 — assuming cooperation from Mother Nature.

WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE COST MORE?

Probably.

People buying their own coverage through the exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act should see premiums go up faster in 2016 than in previous years, said Cynthia Cox, associate director of health reform and private insurance at the Kaiser Family Foundation.

According to Kaiser research, if you do not shop around and let your plan passively renew, the premiums for the lowest silver level plan — the most popular on the exchange — will increase 15 percent on average next year. If you are willing to switch, premium increases are expected to be zero to 1 percent. This is because the exchange is set up to encourage shopping around.

These increases apply only to people who are receiving subsidies to help pay for the insurance. □

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US Financial Front:

Holiday sales pattern skews online; malls lose some luster



A consumer looks at Cyber Monday sales on her computer at her home in Palo Alto, Calif. Online sales growth so far this holiday season is surpassing growth in sales at physical stores, according to First Data, which analyzed online and in-store payments.

(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma)

A. D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—More often shoppers are making the decision to sit on their couches rather than head to stores this holiday season.

Online sales growth so far this holiday season is surpassing growth in sales at physical stores, according to First Data, which analyzed online and in-store payments from Oct. 31 through Monday.

Sales growth for stores is up 2 percent, while online sales rose 4.6 percent, according to First Data, which declined to give dollar figures, citing proprietary reasons.

Total spending, including sales in both physical stores and online, climbed 2.4 percent, stronger than the 1.8 percent growth during the same period last year. While physical stores still account for the majority of spending, the uneven growth between buying at locations and on websites

signals the continuation of a big shift in how U.S. consumers are shopping. This season, Mother Nature appeared to provide an extra lift to online sales, analysts said. While unseasonably warm weather has hurt overall sales of cold-weather items, it appears to be driving more shopping to buy on their PCs or mobile phones since they don't want to waste a pleasant day inside a mall. "Store traffic is down everywhere, and it's compounded by the weather," said Steven Barr, U.S. retail and consumer sector leader for PwC.

"We do believe that warm weather is driving consumers online."

The big question, he asks, is whether warm weather is the number one reason or a secondary reason shoppers are heading online this season.

The overall shift to online spending is largely due to more retailers working to improve their websites and

offer speedier delivery on orders placed online. As a result, shoppers, who increasingly are looking for convenience, are spending more of their holiday budgets online.

That's led to a big gap in some product categories between online and physical stores. According to First Data, clothing and

accessories stores had a 2.9 percent sales decline so far this season, compared with a 3.7 percent increase online. Furniture and home furnishings store sales slipped 0.5 percent, while online increased 8.1 percent.

And while the average order for key product areas remained largely the same

as last year, clothing and accessories got hit hard because of deep discounting. Stores have needed to ramp up price cuts to get rid of excess goods amid the mild temperatures that have extended into December. As a result, the average ticket size for those products went to \$88.30 from last year's \$83.43. □

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Iraqi troops advance in battle for IS-held city of Ramadi

QASSIM ZAHRA
Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi forces on Tuesday reported progress in the military operation to retake the city of Ramadi from the Islamic State group, saying they made the most significant incursion into the city since it fell to the militants in May. Losing Ramadi — the capital of sprawling western Anbar province and Iraq's Sunni heartland — was a major blow to the Iraqi government. It was the government's biggest defeat since IS militants swept through areas in the country's north and west, including Iraq's second-largest city of Mosul, in the summer of 2014.

Iraqi forces announced a counteroffensive shortly afterward Mosul fell but progress has been sluggish and clawing territory back from IS has proven more difficult than expected.

Col. Steve Warren, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Baghdad, said there are 250 to 350 Islamic State fighters in Ramadi, as well as several hundred outside the city on the northern and western perimeter.

"I think the fall of Ramadi is inevitable," Warren told Pentagon reporters. "But that said, it's going to be a tough fight ... it's gonna take some time."

He said American military advisers remained outside the city at al-Taqaddum, a



Iraqi soldiers advance their position in northern Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, Iraq, Monday, Dec. 21, 2015.

(AP Photo)

desert air base that is serving as a training site. It was a U.S. military hub during the 2003-2011 war.

Iraqi spokesman Sabah al-Numan said troops crossed the Euphrates River north of the city and its Warar tributary to the west and pushed into downtown Ramadi. From the south, troops led by the counter-terrorism agency made progress in the Dubbat and Aramil neighborhoods, about 3 kilometers (less than 2 miles) from the city center, Gen. Ismail al-Mahallawi, the head of operations in Anbar province, told AP.

Sporadic clashes broke out and advancing Iraqi forces were forced to remove roadside bombs planted by the extremists, al-Numan added.

On Tuesday, the Dubbat neighborhood saw heavy fighting, with one soldier killed and 14 wounded, said an official in the Anbar operations room, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media. Warren said U.S. officials

found a pamphlet in Fallujah that was distributed to IS fighters, calling on them to disguise themselves as Iraqi security forces and then film themselves committing atrocities, such as killing and torturing civilians and blowing up mosques. According to a copy of the document distributed to reporters, it said the video clips should be distributed to television outlets "to depict the conflict as if it is a sectarian war." It was signed by a security and military official named Abou Hajar al-Issawi and dated early October.

Warren said he believed the document is legitimate, but so far there were no reports of IS fighters posing as Iraqi forces.

Al-Numan said no paramilitary forces — a reference to pro-government Shiite militias whose actions have raised concerns in Sunni territory — were taking part in the operation. The Iraqi air force and the U.S.-led international coalition were providing air support to troops on ground and bombing IS

targets, he said. Since overrunning Ramadi, just 130 kilometers (80 miles) west of Baghdad, the Islamic State group has destroyed all the bridges around the city. It also demolished the Anbar operations command and fanned out into the city's residential areas to set up less conspicuous centers of command.

As the military operation continues, Ramadi's civilian population — estimated to be between 4,000 and 10,000 — remains mostly trapped inside the city. Iraqi officials say they believe civilians will be able to get out, but coalition officials report that so far they have only witnessed small groups doing so.

Warren said Iraqi forces had dropped leaflets telling residents what routes to use to escape. Ramadi, like the rest of Anbar province, is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, the minority community that complains of discrimination by the Shiite-led government in Baghdad. □

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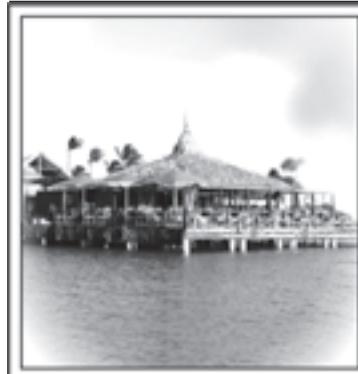
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IOM: Over 1 million refugees, migrants enter Europe in 2015



Afghan migrants camp out on the Place de la Republique in Paris, Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015. Dozens of Afghan migrants chose the site of the Paris attacks memorial to call attention to their lack of housing.

(AP Photo/Jacques Brinon)

JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — More than 1 million people driven out of their countries by war, poverty and persecution entered Europe in this record-breaking year, migration experts said Tuesday, a symbolic milestone cap-

ping a mass movement of people that has challenged the concept of European unity. With just days left in 2015, the Geneva-based International Organization for Migration said 1,005,504 people had entered Europe as of Monday, more

than four times as many as last year. Almost all came by sea, while 3,692 others drowned trying to make the crossing. IOM director-general William Lacy Swing urged European governments to make migration safer. "We know migration is inevitable. It's necessary

Turkey: Russian campaign boosts IS in Syria

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish Prime Minister Ahmed Davutoglu slammed Russia on Tuesday for bombing moderate rebels and civilians in Syria, arguing that Moscow's aerial campaign has boosted the Islamic State group.

Davutoglu told members of his ruling Justice and Development party that Russia has mostly been "targeting moderate opposition groups and civilians," and that IS militants have become "stronger in areas where opposition groups lost power."

The prime minister condemned what he said was a Russian Air Force attack in the Syrian town of Idlib on Dec. 20, an incident that killed more than 40 people, according to early reports. Relations between Ankara and Moscow soured last month after the Turkish army downed a Russian jet on the Syrian border, an incident that led to the death of a Russian pilot and rescue marine. Ankara has said its airspace was violated and warnings ignored. Moscow has denied this. □

Davutoglu also welcomed a U.N. Security Council resolution endorsing an international road map for the Syrian peace process but expressed concern that the Syrian people will not be protected from "Assad's cruelty."

Turkey and Russia, which were previously close economic partners, are at odds over Syria. Moscow staunchly defends the Damascus regime of President Bashar Assad while Turkey has served as a base for Syria's armed and political opposition. □

and it's desirable," he said, adding: "Migration must be legal, safe and secure for all — both for the migrants themselves and the countries that will become their new home."

The IOM compiles the numbers from government records in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, Malta and Cyprus, spokesman Joel Millman said. He noted that the real number of people entering Europe may be even larger, because authorities are struggling to track all arrivals given the sheer volume.

Most people entered Europe via Greece, which took in 820,000 people this year, nearly all of them crossing from Turkey by boat across the Aegean

Sea. Another 150,000 came into Italy across the Mediterranean from north Africa, while smaller numbers crossed from Turkey by land into neighboring Greece and Bulgaria. Much smaller numbers arrived by boat to other Mediterranean countries. Others — not accounted for in the IOM tally — crossed into Europe across other borders, such as a route from Russia to Norway where a few thousand people have crossed by bicycle.

About half of the people entering Europe were Syrians, while 20 percent were Afghans and 7 percent Iraqis, IOM said.

Many fleeing war and persecution are likely to be granted refugee status. □

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El Gordo giveth:**Beach town hits mega-jackpot in Spain's lottery****ALAN CLENDENNING****CIARAN GILES****Associated Press****MADRID (AP)** — Decked out in their school uniforms, young Spanish school children in Madrid's stately

The No. 1 prize gives out a jackpot of just 400,000 euros, but more than 1,000 tickets win the big one and the lottery hands out 24 million prizes overall.

Though other lotteries

or agencies are selling it. Across the nation, people stay glued to the television as lower level winning numbers are announced until El Gordo is sung out. Then a tradition kicks in, with peo-

of different agencies, but went this time to just one in the southern beach town of Roquetas de Mar, where elated winners arrived and cracked open bottles of sparkling wine for a celebratory street party.

The mayor called the win great news for his city in the province of Almeria, which relies on tourism and agriculture but has an unemployment rate of 31 percent — much higher than Spain's national 21 percent jobless rate.

"I'm really happy and I congratulate all the winners," Mayor Gabriel Amat told the Voz de Almeria newspaper. "It's very important for the town, especially in the difficult times we've been facing."

Similar scenes happened at lottery agencies around the country that sold tickets with lower payouts, with scenes of the street parties broadcast live on television. The lottery was first established as a charity in 1763, during the reign of King Carlos III, but its objective gradually shifted toward filling state coffers. El Gordo itself dates from 1812 and the children who have sung out the numbers for centuries attend the Saint Ildefonso school. School children also featured hugely this year for the top winning ticket — with nearly half bought from the Roquetas de Mar lottery agency by a high school in the nearby town of Laujar de Andarax, population of 1,600. Students then resold the tickets to raise money for a school trip, meaning the town was flush with winners. □



Cristina Ruiz, third left, 53, celebrates in front of a lottery office with red wine beside others owners after selling the second Christmas lottery prize "El Gordo, in Logrono, northern Spain, Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015.

Teatro Real opera house sang out lottery numbers on live TV Tuesday for Spain's massively popular Christmas lottery that showered 2.2 billion euros (\$2.4 billion) across the country.

They finally sang out "El Gordo," the biggest winner in the drawing: number 79,140. People who bought that number in a southern beach city were the luckiest ones this year.

But Spaniards all over the nation shared in the wealth because their lottery system doles out prizes much more broadly than lotteries with huge jackpots for just a few winners.

make headlines with their larger top prizes, El Gordo (The Fat One) is ranked as the world's richest and makes its mark every year in Spain, uniting the country because almost everyone takes part.

With so many prizes, there are plenty of winnings for Spaniards who band together in office pools and groups of family members or friends to buy anywhere from one to dozens of the tickets costing 20 euros each.

People can't pick their own numbers, so if they want a certain one they have to go online to find out if it exists and if so which agency

make headlines with their larger top prizes, El Gordo (The Fat One) is ranked as the world's richest and makes its mark every year in Spain, uniting the country because almost everyone takes part.

With so many prizes, there are plenty of winnings for Spaniards who band together in office pools and groups of family members or friends to buy anywhere from one to dozens of the tickets costing 20 euros each.

The top winning number is usually sold in a number

Winter heat wave envelops usually freezing Moscow**JIM HEINTZ****Associated Press****MOSCOW (AP)** — It's usually the cold that's bitter in Moscow in December, but this year it's the humor that bites during an unusual warm spell.

As temperatures climbed as high as 7 degrees Celsius (45 degrees Fahrenheit) in the Russian capital in recent days, a joke began circulating on the Internet: This was nature's compensation for Russians being unable to take vacations in Egypt and Turkey this year — two top destinations for Russian winter holidays. Russia banned all its airlines from flying to Egypt after one of its airliners was bombed there in October, killing all 224 people on board, and Russian charter trips to Turkey were suspended following the Nov. 24 shooting down of a Russian warplane.

The weather is blamed on cyclones in the Atlantic, spreading warmth and rain over most of western Russia. Although 7 C isn't a heat wave by most standards, it's an unsettling change for a city where temperatures average minus 6 C (21 F) in December — and it has broken records set in 1936. Worse yet, it just seems so un-Russian. So much so that a top Russian politician found it necessary to promise that a real winter is on the way. "There necessarily will be snow, I assure you. There will be snow on the 30th," Sergei Naryshkin, speaker of the lower house of the Russian parliament, declared Monday. □

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The Aloe Vera Plant, a brief history.



Aloe Vera's healing properties were discovered centuries ago and it has been used as an ingredient in medications throughout the world by many different cultures ever since. The plant was introduced in Aruba in the mid 1800's, and because of the perfect weather conditions for the plant to grow in; Aruba became one of the largest exporters of Aloe Vera products in the world earning the nickname "Island of Aloe". Aloe has proven to be so important to the local economy that the plant is even shown in the code of arms of Aruba. Aloe Vera nowadays tops the list as one of the most powerful moisturizers and hydrating remedies available and Aruban aloe is known to be the best in the world.



The Aruba Aloe Balm Factory and Museum Tour:

Founded in 1890, Aruba Aloe Balm is one of the oldest companies in Aruba and the only company that still grows and processes Aloe on the island. By visiting this iconic landmark and plantation, you will learn about the plant's rich history and about how Aruba Aloe makes its world famous skin care products.

During the tour, the super friendly local staff will guide you through the process of how they grow, hand cut and process the products that are sold worldwide. You will also get a guided tour of the museum that serves as a national depository for ancient aloe tools and equipment as well as a complete library on the history, manufacturing and healing qualities of Aloe.

Laura & Dominio Bucciero, from Naples Italy on their honeymoon:

"First time in Aruba, we are here for our honeymoon and staying for a week. The tour is very interesting, even though I don't perfectly understand English. We have Aloe in Italy but there it's not such good quality as the Aloe here. I have purchased the hand and body lotion because I don't really sunburn but still want very smooth and hydrated skin." If you want to experience this unique and authentic experience come visit us during your stay here on Aruba! The FREE tour & museum are open **Monday thru Friday from 8 am. to 5 pm. and Saturday from 9 am. – 5 pm.** If you are interested in learning more about Aruba Aloe products you can also visit www.arubaaloe.com. We hope to see you soon!"



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Haiti officials postpone elections set for this weekend



A demonstrator holds up a teargas grenade after UN Peacekeepers from Brazil fired it during a protest against the country's electoral council in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Less than a week before balloting was scheduled, Haitian authorities postponed the country's presidential and legislative runoffs. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)

DAVID MCFADDEN
Associated Press
PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)
— Less than a week be-

fore balloting was scheduled, Haitian authorities postponed the country's presidential and legislative

runoffs because they said they needed to wait for recommendations from a special commission tasked

with evaluating the widely criticized electoral process. In a brief statement issued this week, Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council said the vote scheduled for Dec. 27 was postponed until further notice. They did not provide a new date for the final round of national elections. Council spokesman Roudy Stanley Penn said a new date will be announced once a commission created by presidential decree has concluded its work. Last week, President Michel Martelly announced that a five-member commission would assess Haiti's electoral process ahead of the runoffs that opposition factions have threatened to derail because of suspicions of widespread fraud. It was expected to take three days to conclude its review and make recommendations to the government

and the electoral council. But the review panel has not yet been installed and various opposition factions objected to the commission's members, saying that the government didn't seek consensus with the 10 sitting senators and opposition leaders before the five members were chosen. The "Group of Eight" alliance led by second-place presidential finisher Jude Celestin said it was meant merely as a "cosmetic solution." In Monday comments to The Associated Press, Martelly said the evaluation commission is intended to provide clarity to what he asserts are baseless fraud allegations stoked by the opposition. Once the commission finishes its work, he said he's confident the country can move ahead with the final round of elections "because we want it to be credible." He said his government has lately been in talks with electoral officials, senators and opposition figures, including Celestin's camp, to find a way out of the electoral impasse. For weeks, the opposition alliance demanded an independent review of late October elections that it insists were rigged in favor of the government-backed presidential candidate. But the Provisional Electoral Council rejected their demands, arguing that they lacked the power to authorize a review of the official results. □

Colombia's president legalizes medical marijuana

JACOBO GARCIA
Associated Press
BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)— Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos signed a decree on Tuesday legalizing the growing and sale of marijuana for medical purposes, a dramatic shift in a country long identified with US-backed policies to stamp out drug crops. Santos said the new regulatory framework was long overdue given that Colom-

bians had been consuming marijuana and marijuana-based products in a legal void for years. The new rules "represent a major step that put Colombia at the vanguard and forefront of the fight against illnesses," Santos said during the signing ceremony for the presidential decree.

With the new rules, Colombia joins countries from Mexico to Chile that have

experimented with legalization or decriminalization as part of a wave of changing attitudes toward drug use and policies to combat it in Latin America. Colombia has long been identified with U.S.-backed policies to eradicate narcotics production and a sharp decline in levels of violence over the past 15 years is largely attributed to the no-tolerance policing. Proponents of the new

approach say as many as 400,000 Colombians suffering from epilepsy and other ailments could benefit from the clearer regulatory framework. Colombians for two decades have been allowed to possess small quantities of any narcotic for personal use due to a series of Constitutional Court rulings guaranteeing the "free development of one's personality." □


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LOCAL Aruba TODAY

Paseo Herencia is a Great Place for Xmas Dinner; Just Ask the Staff!

PALM BEACH - Paseo Herencia Shopping Mall in Palm Beach has several excellent options to enjoy a delicious dinner, offering anything from Mexican to an ample Argentine mixed grill. It was, however, at their newest, and most intriguing venue, The Lazy Turtle, where the mall's top management chose this year to treat their office staff to a fabulous holiday dinner.

The mood was bright and



festive, with shoppers strolling the halls, enjoying the lively decor and stunning array at the many shops. Open for only one month, The Lazy Turtle is impressing diners with its unique and diverse menu, featuring international cuisine along with unusual dishes from Africa and Thailand. They have put together a very tempting special holiday menu for groups of ten or more. It features excellent choices for starters and a main course, and you cannot go home without sampling the Double Choco-



late Caramel Turtle dessert! Co-owner of Paseo Herencia Dan Oduber and GM Valerie Pietersz-Camacho noted their staff was very well pleased with this year's end of year celebration. They savored fine food and company, while being gently serenaded by Steelpan, a regular feature of Friday night at the mall. All the staff and owners of Paseo Herencia Shopping Mall expressed their best wishes to all their loyal patrons, island visitor and the populace of Aruba a very happy and healthy holiday season, and all the best in 2016! □



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PALM BEACH - Celebrate Christmas at Bugaloe! Join us on Christmas for your very own delicious Bugaloe Christmas Platter. We'll be around on December 25th to help you celebrate the holidays and enjoy the wonders of the season in true Aruban style! Enjoy a delicious Bugaloe Christmas Platter from just \$25.

The platter contains some of Aruba's best seafood including crab cakes, tuna,

shrimp skewers, and more! You will also find delicious salads and bruschetta on the menu.

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ily, and the Bugaloe crew! There will be music provided by The Bambu Live Band on the 25th, so bring your dancing shoes! Come join

the Christmas celebrations at Bugaloe, located on the Palm Pier between the Hilton Resort and the Riu Hotel. Celebrate Christmas

at the best spot on Aruba. This will be a holiday season you will never forget! Bugaloe will be closing at 9pm on December 24th. □

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Wesley Methodist Church Invites You to Their December 24th Service!



ORANJESTAD - Mike and Sue Faulkner are enjoying their vacation on Aruba for their 25th year. Their 'family-away-from-home' is the Wesley Methodist Church and its members. The church and its members make the Faulkner family and other island guests feel very welcome every year they visit. Each year the Wesley Methodist Church invites island guests to their English-speaking service on December 24th at 7pm. There will be a children's moment along with music, singing of Christmas carols, dancing, and of course the celebration of the Lord's birth.

To attend the service, visit the Wesley Methodist Church, located at Long Fellowstraat 3, in Oranjestad at 7pm on Thursday, December 24th. Happy Holidays! □



Stanford RB Christian McCaffrey Wins AP Player of the Year

Page 21

SPORTS*Aruba TODAY***Giant Loss**

New York Giants wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. reacts after making a catch for a touchdown in East Rutherford, N.J. The NFL this week suspended Beckham for next weekend's visit to Minnesota for his conduct against Carolina, when he drew three personal foul penalties.

(AP Photo/ Julio Cortez)

NFL Suspends WR Odell Beckham for 1 Game**BARRY WILNER****Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) -- Losing control during Sunday's loss to the Panthers will cost Giants star receiver Odell Beckham Jr. one game. The NFL this week suspended Beckham for next weekend's visit to Minnesota for his conduct against Carolina, when he drew three personal foul penalties. The league cited "multiple violations of safety-related playing rules."

Beckham appealed the decision. His case will be heard by either James Thrash or Derrick Brooks, the hearing officers jointly appointed by the NFL and the players' union. Without Beckham, the Giants (6-8) would be missing their best offensive weapon as they try to stay alive in the NFC East race. Beckham and Panthers cornerback Josh Norman tangled from the beginning of the Panthers' 38-35 victory. At one point,

Beckham delivered a diving helmet-to-helmet hit on Norman while blocking. There was plenty of pushing, shoving, swinging, wrestling, late hits and trash talking between them. Beckham, the 2014 Offensive Rookie of the Year, has 91 catches for 1,396 yards and 13 touchdowns, tied for the league lead. He has a base salary of \$893,000 and would lose \$55,813 for being suspended for Sunday night's game.

The suspension was imposed by NFL Vice President of Football Operations Merton Hanks, who ruled that Beckham's actions placed his opponents at unnecessary risk of injury and should have been avoided. "At numerous times during (Sunday's) game against the Carolina Panthers, your actions placed a fellow player at unnecessary risk, and clearly did not represent the high standards of sportsmanship expected,"

Hanks said in a letter to Beckham. Hanks specifically pointed to a late helmet-to-helmet hit against a defenseless player in which Beckham left his feet prior to contact to spring forward and upward into his opponent (Norman); lowered his helmet and initiated forcible contact with his helmet; and forcibly struck the defenseless player's head.

Continued on Page 20

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On the Green:

Major moments and major shots in Golf for 2015

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

Jason Day's drive. Jordan Spieth's flop shot. Zach Johnson's putt.

Major championships produce shots that can be more memorable than the winner holding the trophy. Zach Johnson with a claret jug? The more lasting image from the British Open was Johnson holding his crouch and slowly clenching his fist on the 18th green at St. Andrews.

And then there are shots that stand out only to the player.

The three major champions were asked what they thought was the signature shot from their victory, along with a shot that was particularly pleasing to them because of the circumstances or the quality of the shot.

MASTERS

In a wire-to-wire win, the biggest moment for Spieth was on the 18th hole in the third round. A seven-shot



In this April 11, 2015, file photo, Jordan Spieth chips from the gallery on the 18th hole during the third round of the Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Ga. In a wire-to-wire win, the biggest moment for Spieth was on the 18th hole in the third round. In a risky move, he hit a flop shot that helped him save par and set the tone for the final round.

(AP Photo/Chris Carlson)

lead only 20 minutes earlier was down to four shots, and it looked certain to shrink even more when he missed the 18th green well to the right behind the bunker. In a risky move, Spieth hit a flop shot that helped him save par and set the tone for the final round. "That was the key shot," he

said. "You could pitch it 15 feet in front and hit it hard enough to at least be on the green. But given the severity of that slope, it's going to roll out. A good shot would be 15 feet. I decided to hit a higher one and spin it. That shot is certainly one I don't want over again. It was 1 in 5 getting it up and

down." Not so obvious was the 5-iron on the par-5 13th. He had about 190 yards to the front from the left side of the fairway, but the ball was nearly knee-high because of the slope. He was coming off a three-putt bogey on No. 12. The danger comes from ball above his feet because the swing is flatter with less speed, and the ball won't go as far. Spieth provided his own commentary: "Go hard! GO HARD! GO HARD! GO!" It narrowly cleared the creek and set up a two-putt birdie. Asked how many times he barked instructions to his golf ball, Spieth said, "Less out loud than what was in my head. But still enough."

U.S. OPEN

The winning shot for Spieth turned out to be a 3-wood on the par-5 18th at Chambers Bay, and he felt he couldn't miss.

"I had 281 (yards), but I only had 238 to cover the front," he said. "The only other

option was this 3-iron I was carrying, but it was off an up slope. I hit 3-wood and cut it. As long as I hit a fade, nothing could go wrong, so ultimately I ended up in a perfect yardage. I could miss it really bad and carry the front."

It bounded to the back of the green and rolled back to about 10 feet for a two-putt birdie.

Lost in a wild final hour was a simple par that really wasn't that simple. Spieth's tee shot on the par-3 15th rolled back off the front, and the slope was much like the elevation at Augusta National — you have to see it to believe it.

"That slope was taller than me," he said. "You had to judge the speed the right way. I had to cast it out to the right, but if I hit it too hard it goes 12 feet by. I can't be short or I'm re-hitting. It was perfect speed and went to 4 or 5 feet for a manageable second putt." □

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NBA Roundup:

Spurs extend perfect home record, beat Pacers 106-92



San Antonio Spurs forward Kawhi Leonard dunks during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Indiana Pacers, Monday, Dec. 21, 2015, in San Antonio. The Spurs beat the Pacers 106-92.

(AP Photo/Darren Abate)

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — San Antonio extended its perfect home record and notched the second-best season start in franchise history when it beat Indiana 106-92 on Monday.

The Spurs are 16-0 at home and 21 of their 24 wins this season have been by double figures.

They moved eight games clear atop the Southwest Division while Northwest leader Oklahoma City retained its six-game break by edging the Los Angeles Clippers thanks to a couple of big plays by Kevin Durant in the closing seconds. Also Monday, Houston squandered a big lead in the fourth quarter before recovering to defeat Char-

lotte, and Nikola Vucevic led Orlando to a road win at New York.

San Antonio's Kawhi Leonard had 24 points and Tony Parker scored 15 points for the Spurs, who have won six straight.

George Hill and Jordan Hill each had 15 points for Indiana.

Oklahoma City's Durant hit a go-ahead jump shot with 5.8 seconds left before blocking a potential game-winning 18-footer by Chris Paul as time expired, giving the Thunder a 100-99 win against the Clippers.

Russell Westbrook scored 33 points and Serge Ibaka added 17 for Oklahoma City.

Paul had 32 points and 10

assists in another classic duel with Westbrook.

A third straight loss equaled the Clippers' longest skid of the season. Houston's James Harden scored 36 points as the Rockets escaped a late fade-out and beat Charlotte 102-95.

The game was tied before Harden drove into the lane and was fouled as he made a layup. He hit the

free throws to put Houston up 94-91 with 31.6 seconds left. Harden made 16 of 19 free throws and secured Houston's third straight win by making two with 13.9 seconds remaining.

Kemba Walker led the Hornets with 14 points.

Orlando's Vucevic tied his season high with 26 points and grabbed nine rebounds, powering the

Magic to a 107-99 win at New York.

Vucevic had a pair of baskets and Evan Fournier added a 3-pointer and another basket in an 11-2 spurt after the Knicks had cut it to 93-92 with 3:25 left. Lance Thomas was 9 for 9 and tied his career with 24 points for the Knicks, who had won their previous four.□

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Stafford leads Lions past Saints, 35-27



Detroit Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford (9) passes in the first half of an NFL football game against the New Orleans Saints in New Orleans, Monday, Dec. 21, 2015. The Lions held on to beat the Saints 35-27.

(AP Photo/Brynn Anderson)

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Detroit quarterback Matthew Stafford used accuracy and poise to pass for 254 yards and three touchdowns, leading the Lions to a 35-27 victory at fast-finishing New Orleans on Monday.

The Lions (5-9) raced to a 28-3 lead, but Drew Brees threw a pair of touchdown passes — one shortly after a Lions fumble — to help New

Orleans (5-9) get to 28-20 with about 10 minutes left. Brees passed for 341 yards and three touchdowns, becoming only the fourth quarterback to surpass 60,000 yards in a career while also eclipsing the 4,000-yard mark for the 10th straight season.

Brandin Cooks caught 10 passes for 124 yards and a touchdown for the Saints, who will finish with con-

secutive seasons of more losses than wins, for the first time since Sean Payton became coach in 2006. Golden Tate caught two touchdown passes for Detroit. The Lions' last-ranked running game accounted for 150 yards and two TDs against New Orleans' last-ranked run defense. Stafford played nearly mistake-free, completing 22 of 25 passes without turning

the ball over. The Lions led 28-3 when Ameer Abdullah scored on a 15-yard run around the left end early in the third quarter. New Orleans responded with Brees' 27-yard touchdown pass to Cooks and closed the gap a little more with Kai Forbath's short field goal after the Lions made a clutch stop on a third-and-goal from the 4-yard line.

Giants

Continued from Page 17

This "blindsight block" was particularly flagrant because Beckham, with a 10-yard running start, had an unobstructed path to his opponent, the position of the opponent was not impacted by any other player, and the contact with the head/neck was avoidable, the NFL's statement said.

The conduct of other players in the game is being reviewed by the NFL for potential fines.

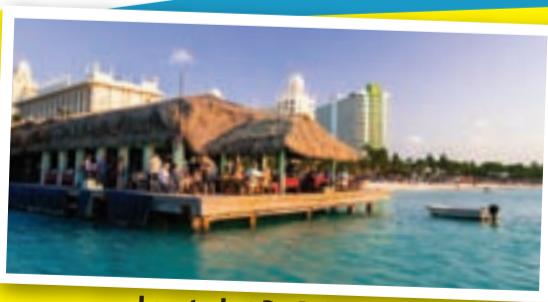
If the suspension is upheld, Beckham would not be permitted this week to be at the Giants' practice facility. He would be barred from team meetings, attending or watching practices; attending Sunday's game; or having contact with any club personnel except to arrange off-site medical treatment or rehabilitation.

He would be reinstated next Monday.

After Sunday's game, Beckham refused to discuss his run-ins with Norman. There was no media availability with Beckham on Monday.

Asked about the personal fouls, he said Sunday, "You never want to hurt your team like that. I have learned it all throughout my life you know, always second man gets called, always that it is just unfortunate. You go back and watch the film tomorrow and you learn from it." □

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College Football Preview:

UCLA squares off against Nebraska in the Foster Farms Bowl

JEFF BARTL

Associated Press

(AP) - The FBS has been saturated with so many bowl games that the eligibility rules had to be altered in order to fill them.

First-year Nebraska coach Mike Riley certainly isn't complaining after his squad suffered a number of close defeats that have the Cornhuskers believing their 5-7 record is a misrepresentation of their season. They'll get a chance to prove that against a UCLA team that also fell short of expectations in the Foster Farms Bowl on Saturday night at Levi's Stadium.

NCAA rules state that teams must have at least six wins and a .500 record to compete in a bowl, but with a record 80 slots to fill, three 5-7 teams are getting a chance to play in the postseason.

Nebraska was the first to be given the opportunity based on the program's Academic Progress Ratings for 2013-14. The situation is so uncommon that even the university isn't acknowledging the bowl appearance in regard to Riley's contract, which calls for bonus money to be paid to him and his assistants for reaching the postseason.

It wouldn't have been so complicated had the Huskers pulled out some more close games. Five losses were by five points or fewer with none coming by more

than 10, and they hung tough with then-No. 3 Iowa in the season finale before falling 28-20 at home.

The Huskers won at least nine games in each of the previous seven seasons under Bo Pelini, who was fired after 2014. Riley left Oregon State to take the Nebraska job.

"We're really glad to be practicing football," Riley said. "We have a great opportunity. All of what we are doing is focused on winning the game. This is one more great opportunity. We've had a couple of them in the past month, and we have one more coming up."

The Huskers do have a quality victory on their resume, beating Michigan State - which now is ranked third and headed to the College Football Playoff - when Tommy Armstrong hit Brandon Reilly on a controversial 30-yard touchdown pass with 17 seconds remaining in a 39-38 win Nov. 7.

Nebraska ranks second



Colorado wide receiver Donovan Lee, left, is tackled by UCLA linebacker Jayon Brown during the first half of an NCAA college football game in Pasadena, Calif. UCLA will square off against Nebraska in the Foster Farms Bowl on Saturday night at Levi's Stadium.

(AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill)

in the Big Ten in total offense at 442.5 yards per game and has the nation's eighth-best run defense at 113.4 yards allowed per game.

"I think it's a great opportunity for us to show that we're a better team than what our record says," offensive lineman Ryne Reeves told the team's official website. "For us seniors, it's another opportunity for us to go out on top with a win and it would be a good springboard for the

guys going into next year." This was supposed to be the year UCLA took the next step after back-to-back 10-win seasons with Brett Hundley at quarterback. Josh Rosen took over and was named Pac-12 offensive freshman of the year while throwing for 3,349 yards and 20 touchdowns, but the Bruins finished just 5-4 in the conference and are 8-4 overall.

The Bruins began the year ranked 13th and were expected to contend for the

Pac-12 title, even getting some attention as a dark horse for the CFP. Back-to-back losses to Arizona State on Oct. 3 and then-No. 15 Stanford the following week derailed those hopes.

UCLA still had an opportunity to clinch the South Division and appear in the conference title game with a chance to make a major bowl, but it lost 40-21 to rival USC in the regular-season finale.

Instead, the Bruins were relegated to facing sub-.500 Nebraska, which they'll be playing for the third time in four years. UCLA beat the Huskers 36-30 in 2012 at home, then scored 38 unanswered points to win 41-21 the following year in Lincoln.

The advantage this year also appears to go to the Bruins, as Rosen will be going up against a Nebraska defense that ranked 13th in the 14-team Big Ten in passing defense allowing an average of 288.2 yards per game. □

Stanford RB Christian McCaffrey wins AP player of the year

RALPH D. RUSSO

Associated Press

(AP) - Stanford running back Christian McCaffrey is The Associated Press college football player of the year, becoming the first non-Heisman Trophy winner to earn the honor in six

years.

McCaffrey was the runner-up for the Heisman Trophy to Derrick Henry, but received 29 of 60 votes from the AP Top 25 media panel to edge the Alabama running back.

Henry received 16 votes

and Clemson quarterback Deshaun Watson was third with 11. Navy quarterback Keenan Reynolds and Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield each received two votes.

The last time the AP player of the year was not the

Heisman winner was 2009. That season Nebraska's Ndamukong Suh was the AP voter's choice while the Heisman went to Alabama's Mark Ingram.

McCaffrey is the first Stanford player to win the award. □

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Blue-Grey (SAD)

By: Dr Carlos Viana

We are blessed to live in the land of endless sunshine. There's nothing "SAD" about being able to go barefoot and enjoy blue skies every day. This time of year though, we do have rain and life on our tiny island can seem, tiny. Phyllis' antidote to "tiny" is to vacation in the big city. New York City, especially during the holidays energizes her. But after a week of nothing but grey skies, Phyllis begins to feel what our friends up north call the winter blues or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Luckily, even with the rain, it is warm and our sun does shine bright between showers and locals and tourists run for some beach time even in winter. However, for those of you who have had too much cold, snow or rain it can cause more than a passing moment of "sad" feelings. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that often occurs in winter throughout the Northern and Southern Hemispheres due to lack of light and sunshine. It is rare in people living near the equator, where daylight hours are long. In individuals affected by this disorder, the symptoms usually recur each winter, starting between September and November and continuing until March or April; and although SAD may begin at any age, the typical age of onset is between eighteen and thirty. In addition to symptoms of

depression, most sufferers show signs of a weakened immune system during the winter and are more vulnerable to infections and other illnesses, while in spring and autumn they may have extreme mood changes and short periods of hypomania (overactivity). For some people, SAD produces symptoms severe enough to cause considerable stress and disrupt their lives. SAD symptoms usually disappear automatically in spring or when affected individuals travel to sunnier climates. A diagnosis of SAD can be made after three or more consecutive winters of symptoms, which include the following:

- Desire to oversleep and difficulty staying awake
- Disturbed sleep
- Feelings of fatigue and inability to handle daily routine
- Craving carbohydrates and sweets
- Feelings of misery, guilt, apathy or loss of feelings
- Irritability
- Reduced self-esteem
- Desire to avoid social contact
- Tension and inability to tolerate stress
- Decreased interest in sex and physical contact

If relocating to a sunnier location is not possible, SAD can be treated in several ways. First, individuals can buy lightbulbs labeled, "full-spectrum". Full-spectrum bulbs are similar to natural

daylight because the light is perceived to have the color and brightness of daylight. Daylight is a form of energy that travels in various wavelengths. Daylight, because it includes all wavelengths that are visible to the human eye, is considered full spectrum.

When SAD leads to depression, it can be treated with standard antidepressant drugs, or if these are ineffective, natural relief may be found in 5HTP (hydroxy-tryptophan), the precursor to serotonin, which plays an important role in regulating mood, sleep, sexuality, appetite, and vomiting. The benefits of 5HTP, which, unlike other antidepressants, affects only the brain, are very similar to those of L-tryptophan, such as aiding sleep, alleviating age-related depression, and minimizing effects of alcohol withdrawal. But 5HTP must not be taken with other serotonin-enhancing drugs, such as L-tryptophan or Prozac, without the guidance of a physician since this may cause severe side effects, including mania, anxiety, and dermatitis.

In addition, depression caused by SAD can be treated with acupuncture. Traditional Chinese medicine, believes that heat, cold, wind, dampness, dryness, and summer heat are six external climatic forces that can invade the human organism and create disharmony in body, mind, and spirit. Acupuncture can help people who suffer from SAD achieve a more balanced state.

The effects of SAD can be prevented or minimized by

remaining physically active during the fall and winter months. Try winter outdoor activities such as skating, skiing. Jogging, walking the dog or playing outside with the kids can still be enjoyed in winter, but the right clothing and warming up is essential. Make sure you start earlier to catch the shorter daylight hours for safety and enjoyment. If you can't take the cold, switch to indoor stretches and exercises such as working out at a gym, yoga, or try salsa lessons. These are excellent ways to maintain a healthy mind and body. Getting enough quality rest and staying connected with friends and family or getting professional help is important for emotional support.

As a clinical nutritionist, I can never say enough about eating healthy and staying hydrated. In the cold you may not sweat and therefore not realize you are dehydrated. However many indoor heating systems are drying, get a home humidifier if necessary. Including immune supporting supplements like vitamin C, Zinc, Cats claw, Reishi, Shiitake and Maitake Mushrooms can make a difference.

In the cold you may not sweat and therefore not realize you are dehydrated. However many indoor heating systems are drying, get a home humidifier if necessary. Including immune supporting supplements like vitamin C, Zinc, Cats claw, Reishi, Shiitake and Maitake Mushrooms can make a difference. Add B complex to your program, to support strength and energy and 5HTP for "blue" feelings.

Get the Point. Don't spend another winter being SAD. With a little effort, you can adjust your lifestyle to the seasons. Plan and shop ahead for healthy meals. Stock up on immune system and mood supporting supplements. Schedule time and find new ways to exercise, with a friend if possible.

Invest in full spectrum light-bulbs. Try acupuncture; stay active physically, mentally and emotionally with supportive friends, family and professionals. Of course, a winter getaway to a warm, sunny place could help you turn your grey skies to a brighter shade of blue. If you're visiting our island and would like more information, call us for an appointment.

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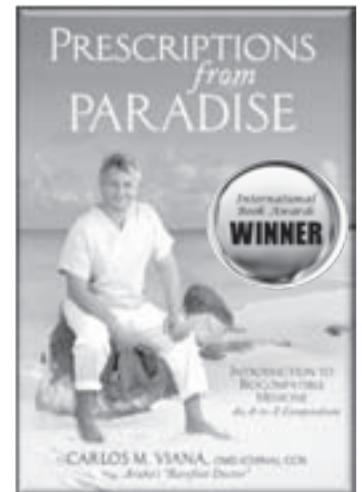
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X-ray vision? New technology making it a reality for \$300

SCOTT EISEN

Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) —

X-ray vision, a comic book fantasy for decades, is becoming a reality in a lab at MIT.

A group of researchers led by Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Dina Katabi has developed software that uses variations in radio signals to recognize human silhouettes through walls and track their movements.

Researchers say the technology will be able to help health care providers and families keep closer tabs on toddlers and the elderly, and it could be a new strategic tool for law enforcement and the military.

"Think of it just like cameras, except that it's not a camera," said Fadel Adib, a researcher on the MIT team developing the device.

"It's a sensor that can monitor people and allow you to control devices just by pointing at them," he said.

Work began in 2012 to determine how wireless signals could be used to "see" what's happening in another room, said Katabi, who directs the MIT Wireless Center.

"At first we were just interested ... can you at all use wireless signals to detect what's happening in occluded spaces, behind a wall, couch, something like that," Katabi said.

"It turned out that we were able to detect that. And when we figured out we could detect that, we started asking more advanced questions: Could we use it to detect exactly how people are moving in a space if they are behind a wall?"

The device displays the sig-



MIT researchers Emad Farag, left, and Fadel Adib walk through a room with chairs as a screen displays how RF-Capture is tracking their movements through the wall behind them, on the MIT campus in Cambridge, Mass. RF-Capture is a technology being developed at MIT that uses WiFi signals to see and sense through walls.

(AP Photo/Scott Eisen)

nal on a screen, where the person's movements can be tracked in real time. It depicts the target as a red dot moving around the room, occupying a chair and speeding up or slowing down.

The wireless signals used to track a person's motions also can measure the in-

dividual's breathing and heart rate — and potentially identify the person based on the shape of his or her skeleton, said researcher Zach Kabelac. "The person won't be wearing anything on them, and the person it's tracking doesn't even need to know the device is there,"

Kabelac said.

"If something unfortunate happens to them, like a fall, the device will contact the caregiver that they chose to alert" by generating a text message or an email, he added.

That makes health care applications especially interesting, Katabi said. But

she also sees military and law enforcement possibilities — particularly in hostage situations.

"You don't want to send the police inside without knowing where the people are standing or where the hostages are," she said. "If there is someone with a gun, where they are standing?" A company set up to market the technology, now dubbed Emerald, will spin out of the MIT lab next year, with a goal of marketing the device early in 2017, and it's expected to sell for \$250 to \$300, Adib said. The team is working to make the device smaller and to develop an interface that will let users configure it through a smartphone app, Katabi added. The technology raises questions about privacy rights and intrusion, and Adib said the team gave serious thought to those implications. "The user interface will be friendly for setting it up and using it at home, but it will be very hard to use it to track someone just by pointing it at their wall," he said. □

Facebook to enable viewing of Apple's animated photos

ANICK JESDANUN

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The latest iPhones come with the ability to turn still images into video — just like magic — but sharing options had been limited to other Apple apps.

That's changing as Facebook, one of the leading forums for photo sharing, adds Apple's Live Photos feature to Facebook's iPhone and iPad app. Facebook started offering it Monday to a limited number of users initially, with a broader rollout planned in the coming

weeks. Facebook's support follows a similar move by Yahoo's Tumblr service. With Live Photos on the iPhone 6s and 6s Plus, every still shot is accompanied by a three-second video, with sound. For instance, you can snap a shot of your kid blowing out birthday candles — and get video showing the flame going out as everyone sings "Happy Birthday."

The phone automatically records video in the background when the camera app is open. The recording is immediately discarded if

you do nothing. When you snap a shot, the phone saves a second and a half of video leading to that shot and continues recording until you get three seconds in all.

Why not just take video? You might not know ahead of time when you'll encounter a scene lending itself to video. With Live Photos, you always get the video option — unless you turn the feature off.

But sharing had been limited to certain Apple apps — such as the texting app Messages, but not Mail. With tools Apple is making

available to third parties, sharing can now be done through Facebook and Tumblr, too. Your friend merely needs to tap and hold the photo to watch the image animate. The iPhone 6s models are required for creating Live Photos, but viewing can also be done on older iPhones and iPads with the latest operating system. On Android and Web browsers, you get only the still images.

Besides Facebook and Tumblr, Getty Images is also offering a selection of Live Photos th□

US fines Boeing \$12M for fuel tank, other violations

JOAN LOWY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Boeing has agreed to pay \$12 million for failing to meet a deadline to submit service instructions that would enable airlines to reduce the risk of fuel tank explosions on hundreds of planes, among other violations, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration said Tuesday. Boeing must also take a series of actions to improve the safety certification of its planes and its aircraft production quality control, the FAA said in a statement.

The settlement is the second largest for regulatory violations in the history of the FAA. "It is imperative that everyone complies with our aviation system's high safety standards," said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. Boeing said in a statement that the fine "fairly" addresses the matter. "As a company we take responsibility for our actions, and we will never compromise on our commitment to quality and compliance," the statement said. The fuel tank instructions

are part of an effort to address problems that caused a Boeing 747 fuel tank to explode over the Atlantic Ocean off Long Island, New York, in 1996. All 230 people aboard TWA Flight 800 were killed.

In 2008, the FAA published regulations that required manufacturers to develop design changes and service instructions for installing systems to reduce fuel tank flammability. The regulations gave manufacturers until Dec. 27, 2010, to submit service instructions for FAA approval. The instruc-

tions were to explain how to install systems that would replace the oxygen in airplane fuel tanks with non-flammable nitrogen gas, reducing the risk of explosion. Boeing missed the deadline for submitting service instructions for the 747s by 301 days, delivering them to the FAA on Oct. 24, 2011. Another violation involved Boeing's delay in addressing incorrectly shaped fasteners used on airliners, the FAA said. In September 2008, Boeing discovered that it had been installing the incorrect fasteners in

777 airliners.

The FAA alleges that Boeing repeatedly submitted action plans that set deadlines for fixing the problem, but subsequently failed to implement those plans. Boeing finally implemented a plan to address the fastener issue in November 2010, more than two years after the company first learned of the problem. The FAA first proposed fining Boeing \$13.6 million for the fuel tank violations in 2012, and \$2.7 million for the fastener problem in 2013. □

US existing home sales plunged sharply in November

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Home sales plunged sharply in November, as buyers faced rising prices and new regulations that might have delayed some closings.

The National Association of Realtors said Tuesday that sales of existing homes collapsed 10.5 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.76 million. It was the weakest pace in 19 months.

The setback follows solid gains in real estate for much of 2015. Sales of existing homes are on track to rise roughly 5 percent for the entire year. But the introduction of a new disclosure form in October likely prevented many homebuyers from closing on sales

in November. Home values are also rising at more than double the pace of wages.

The median home sales price was \$220,300 in November, a 6.3 percent annual increase from a year ago.

The new rules introduced



A home is for sale in Coral Gables, Fla. The National Association of Realtors said Tuesday, December 22, 2015, that sales of existing homes collapsed 10.5 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.76 million. It was the weakest pace in 19 months.

(AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to inform homebuyers about interest rates and fees may have delayed the completion of sales last month.

It took 41 days to close a sale in November, compared to 36 days a year ago.

The extended timeframe means that some sales may have been pushed back into December.

Sales fell in all major geographic regions, including the Northeast, Midwest, South and West.

Still, an improving job market and relatively low mortgage rates have encouraged home-buying for this year. Unemployment at a healthy 5 percent has endowed more people with a sense of financial certainty. □

Southwest to pay \$2.8 million to settle FAA lawsuit

DAVID KOENIG

AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Southwest Airlines agreed to pay \$2.8 million to settle a lawsuit by the federal government over fuselage repairs that a contractor performed on dozens of planes. The Justice Department said this week that Southwest also agreed to pay up to \$5.5 million in additional penalties if it fails to improve oversight of contractors it hires to perform maintenance

work. The Federal Aviation Administration sued Southwest in November 2014 in federal district court in Seattle, and the case was scheduled to go to trial next March. FAA Administrator Michael Huerta said the settlement gives Southwest strong incentives to correct problems discovered by FAA investigators. The government asked the court to let it fine Southwest \$25,000 to \$27,500 for each time one of the planes flew

before the maintenance work was done properly. In court filings, Southwest had denied all of the FAA allegations and called some of them hyperbole. Southwest spokesman Brad Hawkins said Monday that safety is the airline's top priority. "We remain committed to meeting or exceeding all applicable FAA safety regulations," he said. The FAA faulted work done by Southwest's contractor, Aviation Technical Services

Inc. in Everett, Washington. The FAA said Southwest was still responsible for making sure that the work was done correctly. The FAA charged that from 2006 to 2009 Southwest used 44 Boeing 737 planes that had undergone improper fuselage repairs. According to Boeing instructions, when repairs are made to overlapping aluminum panels that make up a plane's fuselage, workers are to apply seal-

ant between the panels and install new fasteners within a limited time.

ATS workers placed fasteners in only some of the rivet holes during the allowed time, and they didn't properly support the fuselage during the work, the FAA charged. The FAA said it alerted Southwest about the improper work in April 2009 but the airline continued to use the planes for another six months before doing further repair work. □

STREET BRIEFS

AP: Express Scripts outlook for 2016 sends shares flying

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Express Scripts is projecting 2016 earnings that surpass Wall Street expectations, sending shares of the nation's largest pharmacy benefits manager sharply higher before the opening bell. The St. Louis company said Tuesday that it expects adjusted earnings next year to range between \$6.08 and \$6.28 per share. FactSet says the low end of that range is three cents better than the average analyst forecast. Companies like Express Scripts run prescription drug coverage for insurers and large employers. Express Scripts Holding Co. provides coverage for more than 80 million people and has been a frequent critic of soaring drug costs. The company has used its massive customer base as leverage to help reign in the price of certain drugs. □

U.S. economy grew at 2 percent annual rate in third quarter

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy grew at a slightly slower pace over the summer than the government had previously estimated. Most economists foresee a slight acceleration in the current quarter and stronger growth in the first half of 2016. The Commerce Department says the economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, expanded at a 2 percent annual rate in the July-September quarter. That was a bit lower than its previous estimate of 2.1 percent, a result of less restocking by businesses than previously estimated. Last quarter's expansion was significantly below the 3.9 percent annual GDP growth in the second quarter. The slowdown reflected a cutback in the pace of inventory restocking. Economists think growth in the final quarter will amount to around a 2.2 percent rate, helped by solid consumer spending. □

Local Business:

How Fed's low rates have benefited Denver and Colorado

J. BOAK

N. RICCARDI

Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Since the Federal Reserve slashed rates to record lows seven years ago, few parts of the country have thrived as much as Denver. You can see it when customers at the restaurant Stoic & Genuine order the "Tower of Power," a \$200 tray of oysters, lobster and caviar. Stoic & Genuine opened in a redeveloped 19th century train station a year ago, the third restaurant established by chef Jen Jasinski. It's earning far more than Jasinski and her partners expected, a sign of the bounce enjoyed by Denver-area workers, entrepreneurs and homeowners. The Fed's near-zero rates played to Colorado's advantages: An educated population, growing tech firms, energy reserves and a real estate market that never really succumbed to the ravages of the housing crisis. Ultra-low rates made it easier to borrow, invest and prosper.

"Things are being built, people are moving here — you can see cranes all around," Jasinski said, sitting in the back of her bustling flagship restaurant, Rioja. And though the Fed on Wednesday began raising rates for the first time in nine years, it's hard to find anyone who fears that Colorado's economy will suffer. For one thing, the Fed's rate increases will likely be slight and gradual. For another, the ultra-low borrowing rates the Fed engineered strengthened a regional economy that was already blessed with healthy fundamentals.

In a country where the sources of prosperity are spread unevenly, Denver provides one piece of a lesson about the possibilities and limitations of the Fed's efforts to revive the U.S. economy after the 2008 financial crisis.

With its high education levels and infrastructure investments — and even the cachet of newly legalized recreational marijuana —

Denver stood to capitalize on historically low borrowing rates.

"This would've happened almost anywhere in the country if these other ingredients were there," said Richard Wobbekind, an economist at the University of Colorado. "These posi-

have risen 2.9 percent to \$27.11 — with both the increase and the hourly pay eclipsing the national averages.

Home prices and household incomes are higher than before the Great Recession, even as the country as a whole, 6½ years into

that the first Fed hike was unlikely to change investments around Denver.

"It's not going to affect any project on the books or any proposed ones," said Norman Franke, regional president of Colorado-based Alpine Bank.

Alpine opened its first two



Restaurateur Jen Jasinski sits for an interview with The Associated Press, inside Rioja, one of Jasinski's successful restaurants, in downtown Denver, Colo. Jasinski says she's not worried about the Fed's rate hike tamping down Denver's red-hot economy. "Things are being built, people are moving here, you can see cranes all around," she said. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

five elements enabled people to benefit from tremendously low interest rates."

Other sections of the country prospered far less or not at all. The Fed's efforts to inject cash into the economy weren't enough, for example, to spare Florida from a wave of foreclosures, to reinvent the battered industrial Midwest or even to raise most people's pay very much.

What's more, many Americans couldn't qualify for the low mortgage rates made possible by the Fed. And workers with no more than a high school degree have been increasingly pushed to the sidelines of the job market.

But the numbers tell a different story in Colorado and its capital of Denver, where the conditions existed for exploiting the benefits of record-low rates.

Colorado's unemployment rate is now 3.8 percent, versus 5 percent nationwide. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings

the recovery, has yet to match home prices or earnings enjoyed before the recession.

Young college graduates are migrating en masse to Denver. Nearly 52 percent of Denver's 25- to 34-year-olds have graduated from college, up from 43.4 percent in 2009. Nationwide, less than a third of Americans in that age group have finished college.

Around the country and the world, the prospect of a Fed rate hike had stirred varying degrees of anxiety. Some analysts still fear that a steady rise in the Fed's benchmark rate could cause the dollar's value to increase further. This would likely depress exports and the profits of multinational companies.

Others worry that high-yield junk bonds could collapse, along with the debt of emerging economies.

But Coloradans who were asked about modestly higher U.S. rates sounded blasé. Many suggested

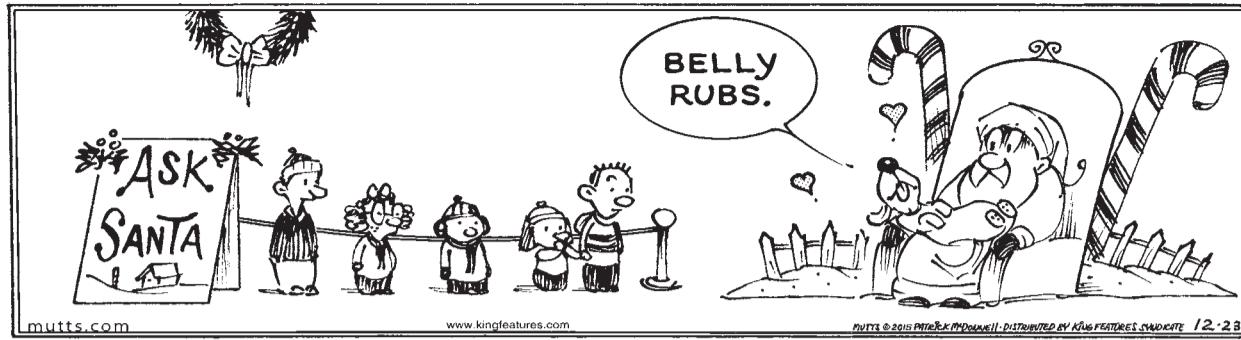
Denver branches two years ago after decades of serving more rural communities in western Colorado, drawn to the area by its robust growth. The bank has been involved in \$80 million in business loans since then.

"It's amazing," Franke said of the Denver area economy, noting that United Airlines recently announced that it will open a pilot training center in the region.

"It's diversified. It's great to see." Car and truck sales, too, surged more in Colorado than in the rest of the country. That meant that Rocky Mountain drivers benefited more from ultra-low-rate auto loans, a discount that's likely to diminish only slightly as a result of the Fed rate hike.

Between 2010 and 2014, auto registrations for new vehicles soared 82 percent in Colorado. Nationally, by contrast, the increase was 57.6 percent, said Tim Jackson, president of Colorado Automobile Dealers Association. □

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Difficulty Level ★★★

12/23

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6 Chix



Globe Piccolo

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Yesterday's puzzle answer

8	2	5	4	7	9	6	3	1
3	9	6	5	1	2	7	4	8
1	7	4	3	6	8	2	9	5
7	5	8	2	9	3	1	6	4
4	3	9	1	5	6	8	7	2
6	1	2	7	8	4	3	5	9
2	4	1	9	3	7	5	8	6
5	6	3	8	4	1	9	2	7
9	8	7	6	2	5	4	1	3

Mother Goose & Grimm



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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					15				16			
					18				19			
					21				22	23		
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					31				33	34	35	36
					38	39			40	41		
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					47	48			49	50		
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										57	58	59
					61	62			63			
					65				66			
					68				69			

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/23/15

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

H	E	S	K	R	N	O	A	S	W	A	B
O	O	P	S	H	A	V	O	C	C	A	P
G	N	A	T	A	R	E	N	E	V	E	S
S	N	I	C	K	E	R	E	D	N	E	S
F	A	I	R	E	L	I	E	L	I	E	I
C	R	A	F	T	S	M	A	M	A	C	S
H	O	W	L	S	P	A	R	I	S	L	E
A	W	Y	C	T	O	T	T	A	D	T	E
F	D	R	R	A	K	E	S	S	E	R	U
E	Y	E	L	I	N	R	S	T	A	M	P
U	M	A	T	H	U	D					
B	O	N	N	D	I	S	H	O	N	E	S
A	G	O	G	I	N	N	E	R	N	O	A
T	R	U	E	A	F	I	R	E	D	A	L
H	E	N	S	N	O	T	E	S	P	E	R

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12/23/15

2 Numbered golf club
3 Largest digit
4 Get away
5 New __; Israel's dollars
6 Valuable thing
7 Portal
8 Family member
9 Henie or Kwan
10 Makes jump
11 Big
12 Stomach woe
13 Takes ten
21 Senseless
23 Wise __ owl
25 Tiny skin openings
26 Basics
27 Orderly
28 Sporting event
29 Actor Romero
32 Receded
34 Cry of sorrow
35 Violent anger
36 Lang, spoken in Stockholm
38 Mates
40 Kathmandu's nation
43 Fibbed
45 Gets smaller
48 "Make it __!"; impatient shout
50 Skillful
51 Investigate
52 Proprietor
53 A.J. Foyt or Jeff Gordon

54 __ away; erodes
56 College official
57 Tiny bit
58 __ up; spends
59 Fit together, as gear teeth
62 Gypsy Rose

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Astronauts help move stalled rail car during spacewalk

MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press
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helped move a stalled rail car back into place outside the International Space Station earlier this week, quickly finishing the primary job of an unplanned spacewalk before moving on to other housekeeping tasks. NASA's one-year spaceman, Scott Kelly, and astronaut Timothy Kopra took just a little more than a half-hour to release brake handles on the rail car and help guide it 4 inches (10 centimeters) back into place. The rail car needed to be moved so a cargo ship filled with nearly 3 tons of food and supplies could dock at the orbiting space lab on Wednesday.

"I see motion!" Kelly said after the astronauts released the brake handles and a robotics officer in Mission Control sent a command to move the rail car.

"Good news! It appears to have reached the work site," astronaut Mike Hopkins in Mission Control told the spacewalkers a short time later. The spacewalk more than 250 miles (400 ki-



American astronaut Scott Kelly returns to the International Space Station at the end of a spacewalk in which he and fellow American Timothy Kopra helped move a stalled rail car back into place outside the space station, on Monday, Dec. 21, 2015. (NASA TV via AP)

lometers) above Earth was just scheduled last Friday. The rail car is part of the station's mobile transport system, which is normally used to transport people and equipment, including the station's big robot arm. After engineers on the ground confirmed the rail car was latched in place, Hopkins told the spacewalkers, "It's in a good config. Well done!"

With their primary task completed, Kelly and Kopra split up to work on separate tasks of routing cables along the space station. Kopra also retrieved some tools stored on the side of the station for a future spacewalk. Finished with their work, the astronauts returned inside the space station more than three hours after the start of their spacewalk. □

Prague zoo says it has record salamander

PRAGUE (AP) — Prague Zoo says it likely has the longest Chinese giant salamander now on Earth. The critically endangered animal is the largest amphibian on the planet. In a statement this week, the zoo says Karlo, a Chinese giant salamander it received 19 months ago from the State Museum of Natural History in Karlsruhe, Germany, is likely the biggest representative of its species. The zoo says, according to the latest measurements done Friday, that Karlo is 1.58 meters (5 feet, 2 and 3/16 inches) long. Karlo's age is estimated at 37 to 38 years and weight is 35 kilograms (77 pounds). The largest



Petr Velenksy uses a meter to show the size of a Chinese giant salamander Karlo in an aquarium at the zoo in Prague, Czech Republic. Prague Zoo says Karlo is likely to be the biggest living Chinese giant salamander in the world. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

salamander on record was 1.8 meters (5 feet, 11 inches) long. The zoo says its worldwide check didn't reveal any longer-living salamander. □

Restrictions eased on blood donations from gay men: FDA

M. PERRONE
AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's three-decade-old ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men was formally lifted Monday, but major restrictions will continue to limit who can give blood. The Food and Drug Administration said it is replacing the lifetime ban with a new policy barring donations from men who have had sex with a man in the previous year. While the one-year ban has been criticized by activists it matches policies in other countries, including Australia, Japan and the U.K. Gay rights activists said the new policy is a "step in the right direction," but falls short.

"It continues to stigmatize gay and bisexual men," said David Stacy, of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest U.S. gay rights group. "It simply cannot be justified in light of current scientific research and updated blood screening technology."

Monday's policy shift was first proposed in late 2014 and follows years of lobbying by medical groups and gay rights groups, who said the previous ban was outdated and perpetuated negative stereotypes.

Dr. Peter Marks of the FDA said the change is "backed by sound scientific evidence" and will "continue to protect our blood supply."

The FDA considered eliminating all restrictions on blood donations from gay and bisexual men, but concluded that would increase the transmission of HIV through the blood supply by 400 percent. □

'The Big Short' and the radicalization of Adam McKay



Director Adam McKay poses for a portrait in Los Angeles. McKay's new film, "The Big Short" opens in U.S. theaters on Dec. 23, 2015.

(Photo by Rich Fury/Invision/AP)

LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — You don't have to look too closely to realize that Adam McKay's work has always been at least a little bit political. But the director, writer and producer, best known for broad comedies like "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy," "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby," and "Step Brothers," turned some heads when he raised his hand to direct an adaptation of Michael Lewis's financial crisis book "The Big Short."

His film, which expands nationwide on Christmas, is a bristling look at the real finance guys who realized before the rest of us that the housing bubble would burst — and profited when it did. It boasts an all-star cast including Christian Bale, Brad Pitt, Ryan Gosling and Steve Carell and has been garnering some serious Oscar buzz.

It's a departure for McKay

in that it's so overtly about the thing he is talking about and not cloaked in allegory or big, absurdist laughs. But it wasn't as big a stretch as one might think.

Politics are life for McKay. He credits his childhood for that, when being dirt poor and on food stamps and having a single waitress for a mother still allowed for a nice life and solid educational opportunities.

"I grew up sort of believing that government could be a positive. It's not always perfect, but there was a positive force to it," he said. "My grandfather and I always talked about the election and what was going on. He was always reading the paper and telling me to stay in touch. I think it was just an old school civics foundation."

That's why it was so surprising to him when he moved to Chicago to start his standup and improv comedy career and he became known on the scene as the "political guy." No one else talked about poli-

tics. On "Saturday Night Live," where he was tasked with writing many of the cold opens, people called him a leftie.

Even his big, broad absurdist comedies have germs of subversive ideas embedded in them. Don't worry if that wasn't clear — it's not supposed to be front and center.

"First and foremost they're supposed to be funny and entertaining. (Will) Ferrell and I always think that you have to have a point of view. So, as silly as it is, with 'Anchorman,' we were making fun of what has happened to local news. 'Talladega Nights' was about this weird red state pride that was going on at that time."

"The Big Short" isn't the first time McKay tried to tackle the financial crisis, either. It was in the 2009 Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg comedy "The Other Guys." The closing credits present a damning portrait of Ponzi schemes and exorbitant CEO compensation with

animated charts.

Audiences at the time left scratching their heads.

"We designed it to be a comedy allegory of the collapse. It didn't quite work on those terms," said McKay, laughing. "That's not the audience's fault. The comedy is so big. It was a good learning experience for me."

"The Big Short" was another chance to address it head on. He devoured

the book in a single night. Brad Pitt's company Plan B held the rights and liked the idea of McKay taking a shot. The book's author, Michael Lewis, didn't have a say in the matter but he thought it was perfect.

"Even if he just took it and turned it into a broad comedy that would be better than what most people would do with it, which would be to make it really tedious," Lewis said. □

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Theater fans gear up for first ever fan fest BroadwayCon



The Palace Theatre marquee and billboards advertising Broadway shows are displayed in Times Square, in New York. The inaugural BroadwayCon, a Comic Con for thespians, will be held at the New York Hilton Midtown from Jan. 22-24.

(AP Photo/Charles Sykes)

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — If you're in midtown Manhattan late next month and see women in green makeup or folks strutting around in colonial outfits, fear not. They're attending the inaugural fan convention for Broadway. The three-day BroadwayCon — sort of like a Comic Con for thespians — promises to connect theater fans with stage stars, but also wants them to leave with more than an autograph. There will be meet-ups for fans of Andrew Lloyd Webber or Stephen Sondheim and one for theater fans who have tattoos. There will be panels about sound and costume design. "Cosplay With the Pros" will feature tips from Broadway costumers. The casts of "Rent," "Fun Home" and "Hamilton" will talk about their shows. There will be a seminar on producing and

plenty of master classes led by veterans. There will be sing-alongs, a game show and a cabaret.

The event was conceived by Melissa Anelli and Stephanie Dornhelm, who co-founded and lead GeekyCon, and the original "Rent" star Anthony Rapp. They've partnered with Playbill and the convention will be held Jan. 22-24 at the New York Hilton Midtown.

Although the Broadway community does have gatherings throughout the year — benefit shows, a flea market and fundraising concerts — it hasn't had a full-on convention until now.

Enter the masterminds of GeekyCon, which grew from a love of Harry Potter to one of the largest and most recognized conventions for fans of fantasy films, television shows and young adult books.

"I think and I hope it's going to help people really understand why fandom and passion is so powerful," said Anelli. "Passion has been nothing but amazing in our world, so I'm excited for the Broadway world to discover it."

The BroadwayCon lineup is constantly being updated, but some of the stars slated to appear include Lin-Manuel Miranda and the cast of "Hamilton," Jeremy Jordan, Michael Cerveris, Alice Ripley, James Monroe Iglehart, Billy Porter, Melissa Errico, Gavin Creel, Seth Rudetsky, Kerry Butler and Christian Borle and Brian d'Arcy James from "Something Rotten!"

Anelli, who was such a passionate fan of "Rent" that she slept outside its Broadway home at age 16 and eventually befriended Rapp, said BroadwayCon will attract at least two large groups of fans. □

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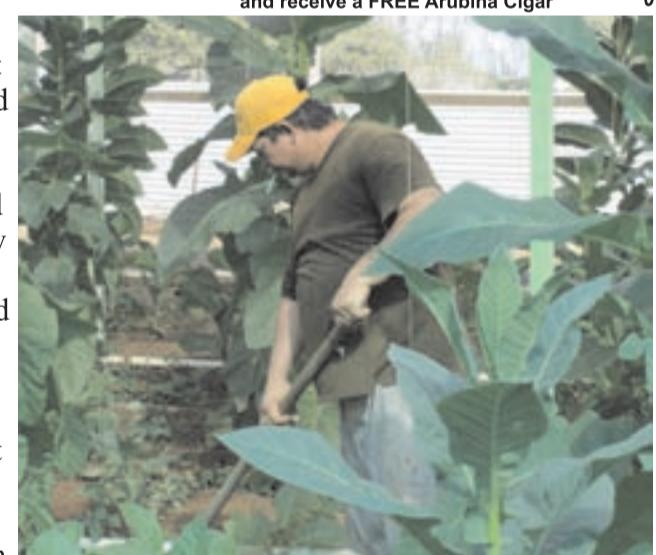
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Owner Benjamin Petrocchi



Q&A: Tarantino on the battles behind 'The Hateful Eight' film

JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Quentin Tarantino is waging wars on multiple fronts.

His eighth and latest film, "The Hateful Eight," is his loudest, brashest defense of celluloid in the battle between film and digital. He shot it in Ultra Panavision, the dormant widescreen format of "Ben-Hur" and other '60s epics, and he's releasing the film first in a 70mm roadshow beginning Friday, a week before a trimmer, digital version lands in multiplexes.

For even Tarantino it's an audacious gambit to release a three hour-plus film (complete with an overture and intermission) in a method that few theaters can still project, let alone know how to. In a multi-screen era, "The Hateful Eight" is an invitation to a full meal of Movie Night.

AP: For you, does the racist clash at the heart of "Hateful Eight" relate to contemporary problems?

TARANTINO: I was excited about trapping these exciting characters in a kind of "Reservoir Dogs" Western, and interested in throwing my hat into the mystery genre. But during the last year of making it, things in the news just kept happening that made the movie more relevant and more relevant. I don't want to go to dinner on that too much. The movie has to work as the movie. But the murders at the Mother Emanuel Church is sort of what this movie's about to some degree or another.

AP: How do you feel about race relations today?

TARANTINO: Sometimes things need to get really bad before they can ever get better. Really bad can become untenable if enough people get sick of it. That was a big thing about why I ended up taking part in that rally and ended up voicing my opinion and declaring what side I was standing on.

AP: You provoked quite a reaction from police groups, one of which threatened "a surprise" for the release of "Hateful Eight."

Tarantino: You should be able to criticize civil servants for what you think is wrongdoing without being painted as a cop-hater. I don't feel the police are all corrupt, however I do feel they are suffering from institutional racism and there needs to be a top-to-bottom examination of the way they practice and the way they criminalize young black and brown males. The fact that they seem to have backed off from it seems to suggest they realize they overreacted on me and it looks bad.

AP: Your film will play in two versions: a scaled-down roadshow, followed by a wider released version.

TARANTINO: The movie that plays in most theaters and most malls and stuff, artistically, everything, it's the exact same movie. It's a little more audience friendly, a little less impressed with itself. But if you go see the roadshow version, if you go to that, you're mine. It's like you're seeing Placido Domingo at the Paris opera house, or you're seeing La Boheme at La Scala or even Pacino on Broadway in "Iceman Cometh." You get the program and the overture and intermission: That's what you're doing that night. Everything else you do is secondary to going to see my movie that night.

AP: Do you worry about the audience's patience?

TARANTINO: If it's too much for people, if audiences don't accept it, well I guess that's just the way it is. I'm not being cavalier when it comes to my financial partners, but I think I've earned the right to do my thing my way. □

Review:

A classic is born in pulsating 'Hateful Eight'

LINDSEY BAHR

AP Film Writer

"The Hateful Eight" is not for the faint at heart. What Quentin Tarantino movie is? But while cinema's favorite cinephile is up to some of his old tricks in his eighth feature, this over three hour long drawing

has a secret, and everyone is the hero of their own story.

There's Samuel L. Jackson as the hyper literate bounty hunter Major Marquis Warren who carries a personal letter from Abraham Lincoln in his coat pocket; Kurt Russell as the violently affa-

character development with something more akin to "here's a famous person who you'll remember." Vivid costuming work from Courtney Hoffman only adds to their uniqueness. Tarantino also keeps you on the edge of your seat wondering who to trust, or,



This image shows Samuel L. Jackson in a scene from "The Hateful Eight." The movie opens in U.S. theaters on Jan. 1, 2016.

(Andrew Cooper/The Weinstein Company via AP)

room thriller also feels like a step forward for the wayward enfant terrible — a step toward maturity.

That's not to say he's mellowed. You need only spend a minute with 87-year-old Ennio Morricone's throbbing, malicious score to know that to be true. Instead, Tarantino shows relaxed power with "The Hateful Eight." It's easy authority that's less manic than the cinematic language we've grown to expect from him. And it still packs a punch to the gut, or, in the spirit of Jennifer Jason Leigh's murderous prisoner, some repeated blows to the head.

This tale of eight unsavory creatures stranded in a one-room haberdashery in the middle of a nasty Wyoming blizzard is in no hurry to get where it's going, and the audience is better off for it. It's a whodunit when no one has done anything yet — more like a who's gonna do it, and what exactly are they gonna do.

Everyone is bad, everyone

ble John Ruth who's transporting a prisoner to town to be hanged for a \$10,000 bounty; Leigh as said prisoner; Daisy Domergue, whose bloody Cheshire grin says more than any monologue ever could. Walton Goggins plays Chris Mannix, the soon-to-be sheriff who may be a master manipulator or just plain dumb; Demian Bechir is Bob, who runs the Haberdashery; Michael Madsen as Joe Gage, the menacingly quiet one in the corner; Tim Roth as Oswaldo Mobray, a British hangman who seems like a Christoph Waltz stand-in before he finds his groove; and Bruce Dern as an ornery Confederate general, wondering what's become of his life now that the war is done.

It seems like a lot, but it's really not. That's the brilliance of Tarantino. Each of his characters is so distinctive, so rich, that they pop off the screen as soon as you meet them. It is refreshing when so many ensemble movies seem to confuse

at the very least, side with. It changes every 15 minutes as the mystery unravels, and then explodes.

The conversations are as nimble as ever, whether they're talking coffee, war, or the benefits of transporting prisoners dead or alive. A big deal has been made about the presentation of "The Hateful Eight." Tarantino and his cinematographer Robert Richardson shot the film in Ultra Panavision 70, a basically dead format that was used on only a few films, such as "Mutiny on the Bounty." There's even an overture and an intermission at the roadshow presentations.

It's hard to see how that's not mostly posturing as most of the film is set in one room, but it does add a theatrical wonder to it all even if the "glorious 70mm" depends a great deal on the individual projectionist. In the screening I attended, the film was so blurry that they switched to digital at intermission. □



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